'A IS FOR APPLE,' 4 | HOLIDAY LIFE, 19 | SLICE OF LIFE, 34

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newington LIFE

More than a mere van

Russ Ryan shows off his VW Westfalia Campmobile

See story on page 16

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"When you give them ownership, when you put kids in charge, they produce."
- Lynn Rosenblatt

See story page 4

ON THE COVER

Russ Ryan has made a labor of love out of restoring his bright mustard yellow and white 1972 Volkswagen Westfalia Campmobile.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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Beyond 'A is for apple'

Her book 'Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet' wins award

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Learning the ABCs is a rite of passage for children and Lynn Rosenblatt is helping them do just that with her "Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet."

The book won a silver medal in the 2016 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards in the reading skills/literacy category. "Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet" includes illustrations, poems, vocabulary words and a theme song, and is available in both paperback and eBook versions.

"I'm very proud I won this award. It meant a lot to me. I worked so, so hard on this," Rosenblatt said. "I felt so passionate about how kids need to love reading. For me to get an award is validation they felt this is worth buying for children to help them learn how to read."

This is the Newington author's second book. She was a longtime elementary school teacher who taught first and second grade for 25 years, mostly in Andover and in Colchester, retiring in 2008. She found a lot of opportunities for creativity in the classroom.

"My wonderful first- and second-graders were spontaneous, adventurous, inquisitive, just filled with ideas. Because I'm basically a kid at heart, I just had such a good time with them and they gave me ideas to really create a lot of projects," she said.

"And I gave the kids a lot of rein when I was teaching because I gave them ownership. And when you give them ownership, when you put kids in charge, they produce."

It was while teaching summer school in Hebron in 1996 that she was inspired for her first book, "Monarch Magic! Butterfly Activities & Nature Discoveries." One of the students brought in a chrysalis. There was a milkweed field next to the school and she would film the life stages of the monarch butterflies.

"I think we raised almost 100 monarchs. It was a very exciting summer," Rosenblatt said.

She wrote a story about two "butterfly buddies" and put together books with some photos for the teachers.

"It was about two caterpillars meeting in a field and going through the life cycle together. It turned out to be quite a story," she said.

At her colleague's encouragement, she decided to take the project to the next level. She needed more professional photos, so the following year, she took new pictures with a better camera.

"I re-edited and changed and revised and refined until I felt I had a really high-quality manuscript I could send out to publishing companies. I made 13 manuscripts and sent them out," she said.

"You have to understand you're going to have rejection and many came back. Then I got a call from Williamson Publishing Company in Vermont. They fell in love with it. It was very exciting."

From that message on her answering machine, it took almost four years to bring the project to completion. Even then, it almost didn't happen. She got a call saying they had changed their mind because the caterpillar was anthropomorphic.

"I said that Mickey Mouse and Goofy and Donald Duck are animals and they talk and they

Courtesy photos

Lynn Rosenblatt's "Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet" won a silver medal in the 2016 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards.

made lots of money for Walt Disney," she recalled.

"They were a very pure, nature-oriented publishing company. The story was gone. It had gone to the catalogue and they had canned it. They said the only thing we can do for it is to offer you the opportunity to write a science book on monarchs."

Rosenblatt turned to another author for advice.

"I called Wally Lamb. He had just been on the Oprah Winfrey Show that week. He's a Connecticut author. I thought maybe he can guide me. He was wonderful. He called me back.

"He said, 'Lynn, take any book in your house. Turn it backwards and turn it upside down.' And he said, 'Does it matter if it says Butterfly Buddies or does it matter that you have published this book?' And the ego in me wanted to be a published author," she said.

"When you give them ownership, when you put kids in charge, they produce."

– Lynn Rosenblatt

Rosenblatt decided to try to write a science book.

"In the next six months, I put all the butterfly facts together and tried to write in way that children would understand it. I wrote 60 pages and when I sent it in, they loved it," she said.

"What they did was incorporate the format of the story and all the scientific stuff went around the edges in sidebars. It became 10 times better than I could have expected. It won four big awards," she added.

When it came time to write "Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet," she again turned to material from her teaching days.

"I needed to know I could do this again. I used all the poems in the book in my classroom," she said.

The book was also a family affair.

"That story had a beginning that was really wonderful. My daughter Teri and I created a 40th birthday card for a dear friend. We were making five bears in a row and sending a 40th birthday card. That turned out to be the title page for this book of poems I wrote 25 years ago for my students," Rosenblatt said.

Her son Ned, who is an associate professor at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, also played a role by doing orchestration for the music for the alphabet song.

"He could read my heart. Teri taught me how to do the bears. Ned read my heart as far as what I wanted to convey musically," she said.

The song was originally recorded at her home, then rerecorded at the Gallery Recording Studio in East Hartford. It is available as part of the package. This time around, Rosenblatt decided to self-publish.

"Because it's an ABC book and a poetry book, the market is saturated. I had the song, I had the poems, I had the word list of 500 phonetically fine-tuned words, and I had the sheet music, so we put it all in the book. Every page is a science or social studies topic waiting to happen," she said.

"I just threw everything into this. You can do that when you self-publish. It's a very useful tool, especially for home schooling and young readers. It's there to really help kids. I know my students loved

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it. They'd act out poems, they'd be on stage performing poems.

"I integrated music and art in everything I did as a teacher. Art grabs kids. Art is that extra something that makes the connection for kids, and when you put music to something, you never forget it," she said.

"Music is like the glue and art is like magical glue that connects learning. The arts are so important to me. Unfortunately, they're the first thing to be cut in school."

Rosenblatt is hoping that her book will be a resource for early reading in town. It is designed for pre-kindergarten through second or third grade.

"Lynn's ability to cross-pollinate the curriculum with visual literacy is astounding. Every subject is infused in her writing techniques, but more importantly, her writing touches all ages. Her 'Monarch Magic' butterfly book reaches the youngest reader to the oldest," Kim Waltmire said.

"She has a unique way of capturing anyone's attention just by the way she colorfully illustrates and photographs her work. It is just remarkable. The way Lynn rhymes her poetic facts, skills and objectives teaches children lyrical ways of understanding new information," she added.

"For instance, 'Rockin'-Rollin' Alphabet' is colorful, vibrant, lyrical and meaningful. She writes her books with a sense of purpose and pride. Her passion spills into her writing and pictures and the children can't put it down."

Waltmire is an educational literacy consultant for grades K-5 focusing on balanced literacy and writing. She and Rosenblatt taught second grade together in Colchester.

Rosenblatt makes presentations to children around "Monarch Magic" focusing both on the lifecycle of the butterfly as well as her own personal story.

"I explain to them how I came to be published, how I was rejected and what I had to do to persevere, how I had to work very hard to follow through, and if you really want something, you have to work really hard at it," she said.

"Lynn's energy and vibrancy lights up a room whenever she does a presentation. She draws you to herself and her work with her tone of voice, expertise, colorful visuals and samples. When Lynn speaks, the children are excited because of the enthusiasm and passion she shows everyone," Waltmire said.

"Everyone feels important when Lynn does a presentation because her passion creates an atmosphere of happiness, creativity and self-expression where all the children feel safe and valued. Every child believes they can be a writer by the time Lynn is done presenting."

Rosenblatt spends much of her day on the computer, both promoting her own work, and doing public relations and marketing for Robert Gottfried, better known as Rob the Drummer, who does anti-drug and anti-bullying programs.

She has three more books she'd like to write some day.

"They cost a lot of money. It is an investment to self-publish and to effectively market your product and be willing to continually promote," she said.

One of those would be a sequel to "Monarch Magic," but with moths. She already has the photos. She also has a song called "One Big World" that was originally written for a school assembly in Andover and later used at the Special Olympics World Games in New Haven.

"That was sitting in a drawer all these years. Just now, after 25 years, I've used the music as the background for an animated video with monarch butterflies that help kids become more aware of butterflies," she said.

Waltmire said her friend's connection to her students was extraordinary.

"Lynn has taught children for over 25 years, at the same energy level, I might add. Former students to this day still continue to reach out to her and share their successes, and more importantly, their precious memories of her as their teacher," she said.

"These are the moments that mean the most. Lynn's teaching and writing has touched children for years and the world is a better place because she is in it. She brings everything to life," Waltmire added.

"Lynn is one of a kind, a gem of a teacher and writer whose legacy will last a lifetime." **NL**

Learn more at lynnrosenblattbooks.com and monarchbutterflyusa.com.

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LIFE *in the classroom*

Newington High School hosts Spirit Week, pep rally and homecoming

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

With the school year fully under way comes a variety of annual traditions at Newington High School. They include Spirit Week, pep rally and homecoming activities.

"We get the whole school involved," Liv Colon, Student Council secretary and pep rally chairman, said.

Each of these activities is organized and carried out by the school's Student Council, a collection of more than 100 students elected by their classmates. Members of the executive board lead various committees dedicated to planning these events each year.

"This is fully student run," teacher and Student Council co-advisor Melissa Morello said. "Every decision is driven by them."

Members of the executive board had to be both elected to the council and earn their positions. The Student Council operates on a points system, allowing all members to earn points for volunteering, working events or posting about upcoming council activities on social media.

All members of the executive board had to earn a high number of points to even be able to run for the position.

"Each of them had to be extremely involved last year," Morello said.

Once elected to a cabinet position, those students chair various committees, ranging from faculty appreciation and community involvement to the 60-person homecoming committee chaired by senior Allison Madrazo.

"There is so much planning that goes into all of it," Allison said. "We're all on the same boat and we're all there to help each other out."

The first line of fall activities the Student Council runs each year is Spirit Week, led by senior Austin Sargent. For one week, each day is designated with a different theme and students throughout the school are encouraged to dress up to match the day.

The final day of the week is traditionally the school colors of blue and gold, making the student body a sea of school spirit.

"There's a lot of planning that we do as a committee," Austin said. "We get together and throw out Spirit Day ideas, then try to narrow it down to about six before sending out a survey to the entire school."

Each day during Spirit Week, Austin and the others on his committee go into each classroom and count how many students are participating. The grade with the most participation at the end of the week wins.

"A lot of people always get involved," he said.

The week culminates with the pep rally, chaired by senior Liv Colon.

"It's basically a giant school spirit day," Liv said. "We have games and activities that the whole school can watch."

The pep rally also is a way to

recognize school athletics. Teams create paper banners that they burst through as they are announced into the gymnasium for the event.

"It's a great way for them to wrap up the season and get that recognition," Liv said.

Planning for the pep rally began in early September with Liv and her committee sending out various surveys to determine what activities fellow students would most like to see.

"When they came back in I looked through all the data to see what was voted for and what we could get volunteers for," Liv said.

"I don't know how Liv figured it all out," Student Council President Emily Carle said with a small laugh.

In addition to recognizing school athletics, the pep rally includes a dance battle, short competitive games and a teacher versus student dodge ball game.

"It seems that over the years the kids really enjoy seeing the teachers get involved with the pep rally," Morello said.

"We had an idea of what teachers would say yes before we even asked," Emily added. "They're all getting into it. The teacher team is apparently coordinating uniforms this year."

As soon as the pep rally ends, Allison and her homecoming com-

Photo courtesy of Melissa Morello

Seniors, from left, Lindsey Mangiafico, Abrial Murray, Corinda Sanford and Arayana Bracken, all 17, wait in the cafeteria before being announced into the pep rally at Newington High School.

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"It seems that over the years the kids really enjoy seeing the teachers get involved with the pep rally."

-Melissa Morello

mittee take over.

"Right after the pep rally, everyone in Student Council goes to decorate," she said. "It's basically all hands on deck with over 100 students. It's kind of crazy because there's so many people running around."

That evening is the school's annual homecoming dance that has been growing in popularity in recent years. The event holds roughly 550 students and last year's dance sold out.

"We had to turn people away at the door last year," Morello said.

Allison and her committee started planning for homecoming two months in advance.

"It's not just picking a theme and decorating for a dance," she said. "We also have to coordinate ticket sales, input that data and handle the cash, figure out food items that will appeal to everyone. There's a lot that goes on besides the dance."

Organizing ticket sales is a full team effort for the Student Council. Members take turns during their lunch times and free periods.

"I totally underestimated the amount of planning that went into it," Allison said. "By the time we get to lunch, we already have a line."

"We also have to coordinate for those who are bringing an outside guest, there are forms they have to fill out. It's a lot," she added.

As soon as the dance ends, the same group that went hours early to set up stays behind to take it all down.

With all of these events, both Morello and her co-advisor Brian Hartley stressed that it was the students themselves who put in all of the work to make them successful.

"They come to me and I help where I can, but this is all them," Morello said. **NL**

The entire student body at Newington High School filed into the gymnasium for a pep rally Nov. 4.

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Student of the month

Middle school student enjoys success, becomes role model

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

At the age of 13, Sofia Giguere is already showing what it means to be a role model. An eighth-grader at John Wallace Middle School, she is part of the school's Academy of Aerospace and Engineering, and has been since the program began in the fall of 2015.

"She's one of five girls in her class, though we've doubled the number to 10 girls with the next class, and I think part of that was that those five girls, including Sofia, were great role models to the sixth-graders we spoke to last year," program leader and STEM teacher Bryan Holmes said.

"There aren't a lot of girls interested in engineering and it really helps to have a girl like her who shows other girls that you can be involved in something like that."

For Sofia, engineering isn't only a subject to study in school. She hopes to some day pursue a career in a that field.

"I've always liked math and science and I really like engineering," she said.

Her classes in the academy, which runs until 4 p.m. each day, allow her and her classmates the opportunity to conduct hands-on experiments in aerospace engineering.

"We have engineering competitions and we'll redesign engines to go on different aircrafts," Sofia said.

Along with enjoying her math, science and engineering classes, she also loves social studies. Her class has been learning about U.S. history.

"I like learning about the Revolutionary War," she said. "It's cool to see all the conflicts that happened and how we got to this place."

In addition to her studies, Sofia has also been an athlete for most of her life. She played soccer for the Newington travel team starting at age 6 and only this year had to stop to balance her schedule.

Sofia Giguere

She also takes weekly religion classes, held at John Wallace, through the Church of the Holy Spirit.

"I've been doing that since the third grade," she said.

During her free time, she enjoys reading, but she does not have a favorite book.

"I just like all books," she said. "Usually I read thrillers or realistic books."

Sofia also enjoys spending time with her immediate and extended family including her younger sister Grace, 10.

Holmes said it is Sofia's maturity and commitment to her education that truly makes her stand out among her peers.

"She's just extremely dedicated to being a good student and being helpful to the other students around her," he said. "She is very diligent about studying and asking questions and getting to the point that she has a real understanding of whatever it is we're covering."

He added her dedication to school has helped her to succeed in her classes.

"She's learned so much in the last year being in this program and it really shows in everything she does," he said.

"She was a great student coming in, but it made her more knowledgeable and more skillful in these high-level math and science concepts. She's really a top-notch student." **NL**

Ready and able

American Radio Relay League marks 102 years of services

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Hundreds of people drive past the American Radio Relay League national headquarters at 225 Main St. every day. One wonders how many of them know what goes on in the radio station near the street or the larger building to the rear.

Chief Executive Officer Thomas Gallagher is convinced that ARRL is, to most of them, a secret. He is hoping to draw more attention to a nonprofit organization that plays a unique role in the world of communications.

ARRL is all about amateur, or "ham," radio. An estimated 765,000 Americans hold amateur radio licenses, according to Gallagher.

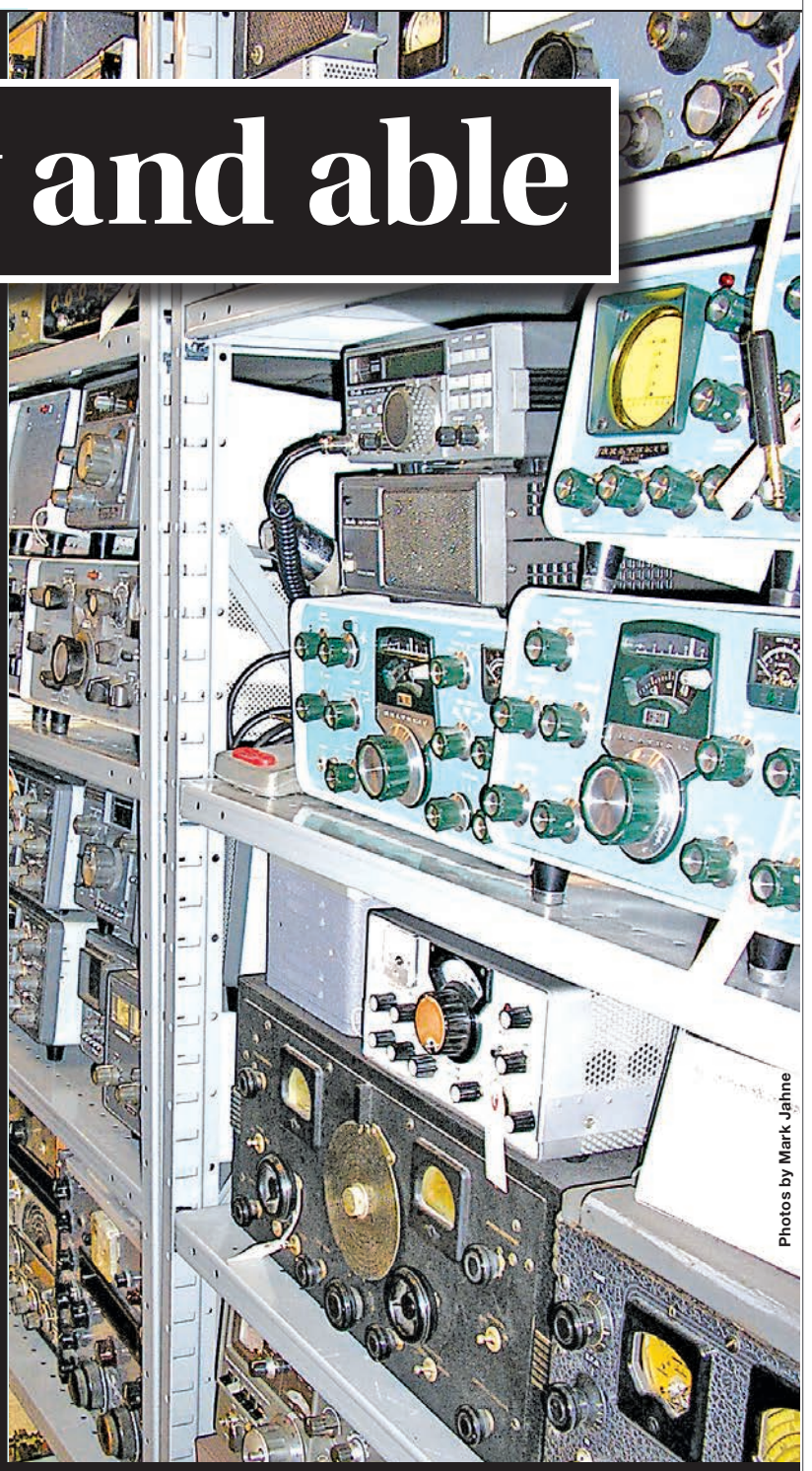
"We are the national association for amateur radio." The number of hams "grows about 2 percent a year," he said.

Gallagher got his license in 1966. ARRL has been around since 1914 and its creation is primarily attributed to Hiram Percy Maxim, whom he called a Connecticut industrialist, entrepreneur and tinkerer.

"Maxim was very interested in wireless. He realized at some point it would become so popular that it would need to become managed and regulated," Gallagher said.

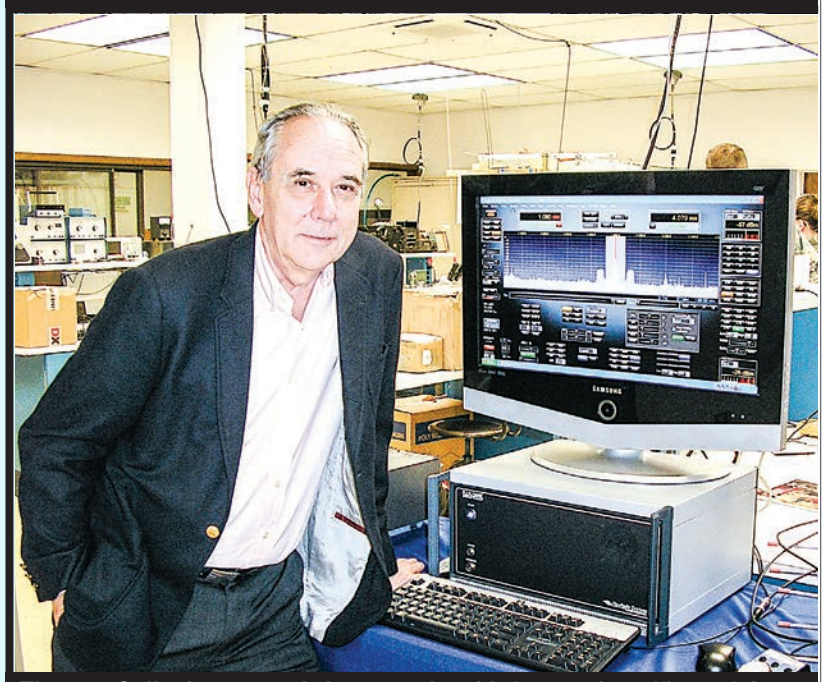
"The sinking of the Titanic really got things going among other ship owners," he added.

Amateur radio was assigned all of the short-wave frequencies that nobody wanted at that time. Those frequencies later turned out to be



Photos by Mark Jahne

The main building contains a room dedicated to the preservation of old radio transmitters.



Thomas Gallagher recently became the chief executive officer of the American Radio Relay League.

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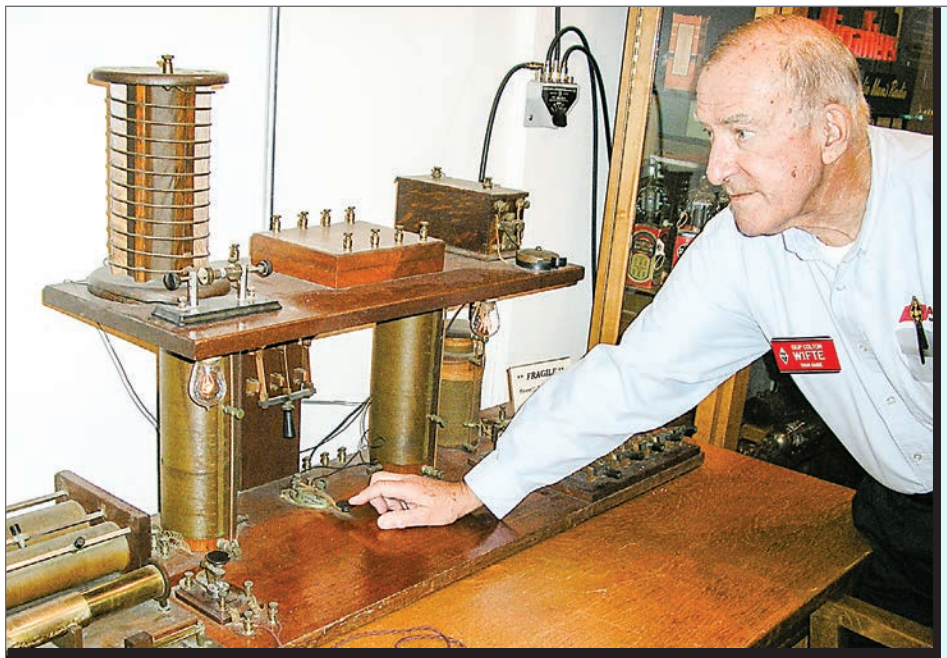

This original spark gap transmitter named "Old Betsy" dates from 1912. Skip Colton can press a button and the small attachment at top left with black knobs on either end creates a spark to power the device.

Amateur radio station W1AW is located along Main Street in front of ARRL national headquarters.

highly valuable, he said.

"We pioneered that part of the spectrum," he said. "We have an extraordinarily rich history."

The modern-day telecommunications industry would love to pry away those frequencies, so Gallagher said it is important that ARRL lobby in Washington, D.C., to protect their use by hams.

ARRL is one of the largest publishers of amateur radio content. Leading the way is QST magazine, which has been in publication since 1915. It also engages in numerous educational programs.

"We are probably the leading subject matter expert," he said.

One recent day, four young U.S. Air Force officers toured the building to see what they could learn.

They are assigned to a radar base on Cape Cod that tracks satellites and a growing amount of man-made space junk as they orbit around the earth.

The organization employs 100 people and boasts of $15 million in annual revenue. It also holds a $27 million endowment. ARRL is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit governed by a 15-member board of directors elected by region.

"It's a membership organization," he said.

Although he holds a license that he received at the age of 14, Gallagher is not a technological person. He gets teased when he sticks his head in the lab where cutting-edge technology is being tested and improved.

Lab technicians regularly test and evaluate new equipment. They also excel at tracking the sources of electronic interference, among many other things. Nearby in the museum part of the lab is a working spark gap transmitter from 1912 affectionately known as "Old Betsy."

"I came out of the investment banking business," Gallagher said.

He spent 35 years with two major firms, including JP MorganChase & Co., before setting out on his own. The new CEO holds an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He also taught accounting and finance at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Gallagher wasn't looking for a new job but was approached this past year when ARRL was looking for a new chief executive officer. He decided to give it a try and has been on board since April 18.

His first task is to maintain the organization and infuse interest in amateur radio to a younger generation. The average age of ARRL members is in the 50s. He's looking for a way for his members to mentor younger people.

"We have a big job to do transitioning to a new generation," he said. "The wonderful thing about radio is it incorporates a broad range of interests."

Many hams enjoy the opportunity to make contact with people all over the world. Some keep score of how many such contacts they make. Language is seldom a problem.

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Thomas Gallagher

"English is the most common language in ham radio," Gallagher said. "I like to go out and operate remotely."

ARRL recently did just that to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Parks. Hams broadcast from parks large and small. They can communicate by voice, data or Morse Code, and in more recent years by computer keyboard.

"They [hams] were very active in North Carolina where the [recent] hurricane came ashore," he said." We share common frequencies with FEMA, the [American] Red Cross and the Salvation Army."

"The computer is being used more and more in the ham radio area," Skip Colton of Granby said.

He has been a ham operator since 1955 and his call signal is W1FTE. He enjoys giving tours of the ARRL facilities.

Another important role hams play is to provide backup communications in times of emergency. That can be an invaluable service to police, firefighters and other emergency services.

"We run emergency communications in times of disaster," Colton said. "We have our own satellites in orbit."

That can include hurricanes, blizzards, major power outages and more. For example, when Hurricane Matthew approached the Florida coast just a few weeks ago, every shelter in the state was staffed by a ham radio operator.

Ham signals are transmitted by what are called LEOS (low earth orbit satellites. Many of them are square, not round, and quite small when compared to other satellites.

All of the astronauts currently serving aboard the International Space Station are ham operators, Gallagher said.

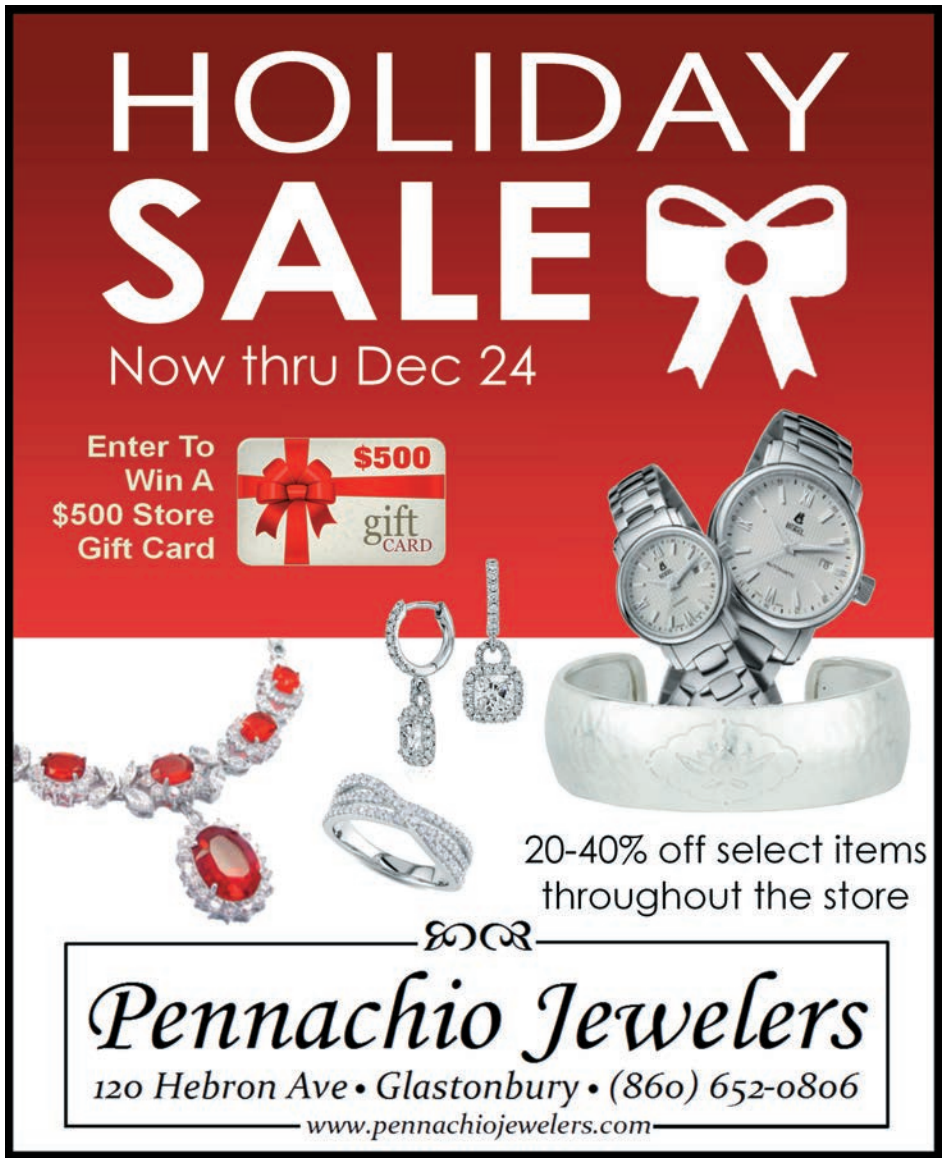
Those who drive past ARRL are most likely to see the brick building that houses its radio station, W1AW. That was Hiram Maxim's personal call sign and it remains in use today as a memorial to his efforts.

"It's the world's biggest amateur station," Gallagher said.

The organization holds an annual field day to encourage operators everywhere to sharpen their skills and maintain a strong sense of readiness should an emergency arise.

Members are also proud of another piece of ARRL history called OSCAR (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio). Construction began on the first OSCAR in 1959 and it became the first American non-military satellite launched into orbit in December 1961.

This early model, which only weighed 10 pounds, had no navigational or propulsion components, so it only spent 22 days in space before plunging back into the atmosphere. But in that short time its simple transmission of the word "hi" was heard by more than 570 amateur radio operators in 28 countries. **NL**



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Questions naturally pop up

Russ Ryan's VW camper always grabs attention at car shows

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Photos by Lisa Brisson

Russ Ryan did a lot of work to restore his prize van to solid operating condition.

People flock to classic car shows to see the vehicles of their youth or the historic cars of the early 20th century. They also like to see how cars still in production, like the Corvette Stingray, have changed over the years.

But the vehicle that often attracts the most attention is neither a muscle car nor a 70-year-old antique. It's a van.

A 1972 Volkswagen Westfalia Campmobile, to be exact. If one has seen a yellow model with a white roof in a central Connecticut car show, there's a good possibility that it belongs to Russ Ryan, 63, of Newington.

The Lantern Hill resident is proud to point out that his vehicle is much more than a van. It serves as a pop-up camper that can comfortably – more or less – sleep a family of five.

Features include five seats, a sink, icebox and closet with mirror. Some models had stoves. The sink is hand operated and can carry 10 gallons of water. It comes with a food prep table.

The driver gently hunches over a larger than average wheel and uses a long floor-mounted stick shift to operate the manual transmission.

Ryan said his son Jeff was the family member who first took a liking to the vehicle back in 2010.

"He liked this when he saw it on the web. I knew it was going to be a project car," Ryan said.

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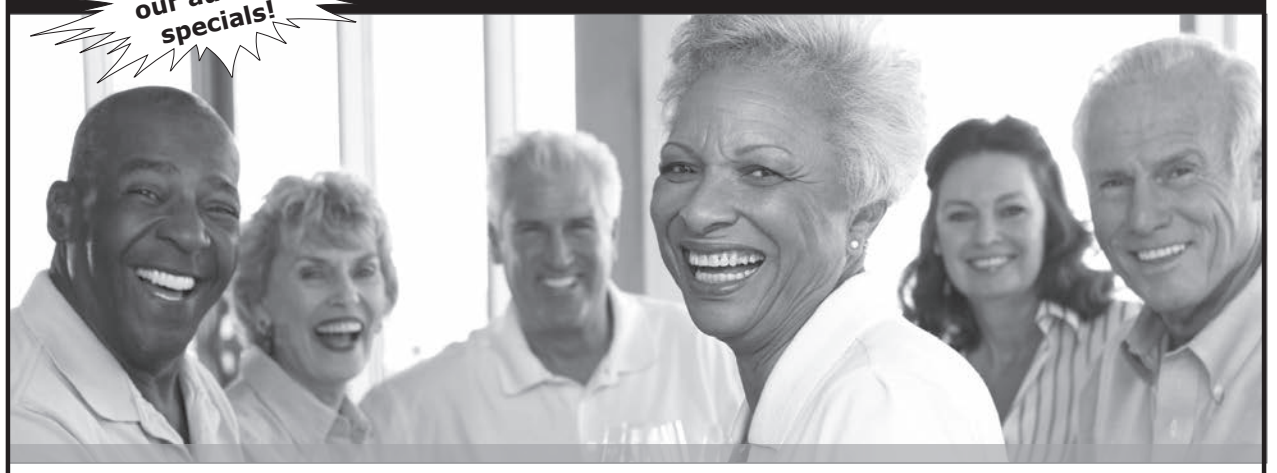

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Applications can also be requested utilizing the AT&T relay service by dialing 711.
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Please feel free to contact DeMarco Management at (860) 951-9411 if you have any questions or need additional information.

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He's not an auto mechanic by trade but he does know how to maintain his vehicle. This particular van was manufactured in Germany and first entered the United States at Jacksonville, Fla. It then made its way to an automobile dealer in Fort Collins, Colo.

Ryan knows the entire history of his VW van including the fact that a prior owner drove it for seven years before it caught fire.

A man from Dodge City, Kan., bought it from the Colorado dealership and repaired it, and Ryan, in turn, bought it from him.

"I call it adventures in slow motion," he said.

Jeff's would-be van quickly became the personal possession of his father once the vehicle rolled into Newington and the young man, then a high school student, got a closer look at it.

"Within hours of getting it here he got off the school bus and came running from the street," Ryan recalled.

When Jeff saw the camping features, especially the beds, he quickly changed his mind.

"No girl's father will ever let me take her out in this," he moaned.

Ryan did get the van up to 72 miles per hour on one occasion but has no intention of trying that again.

Russ Ryan has earned a number of trophies at local antique car shows with his 1972 Volkswagen Westfalia Campmobile.

He has to pay close attention to the engine to prevent it from stalling at traffic lights and stop signs.

The air-cooled motor is a flat four-cylinder design that produces a 68 horsepower level of energy. The driver's seat is ever-so-slightly tilted to the right to enable the operator to better see the various dials and gauges.

"It'll make it up Cedar Mountain without a problem," Ryan said.

It sported radial tires and seat belts when he took possession. He has since added a modern radio as well as insulation and other improvements. Ryan had to rebuild the motor at a cost of $3,000 after it basically melted down on the way to a car show in Willington.

He works closely with the automotive professionals at Bug City in Berlin to keep his van in running order. Ryan is a computer engineer who previously worked as an iron worker and structural engineer.

The vehicle sports an Early American Connecticut license plate. Ryan said his wife Pati enjoys the camper as well. **NL**

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A cut and a trim

Garrett's Barber Shop relocated to center of town

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Garrett Kenny was doing just fine with his barber shop in Berlin. But after 15 years, he wanted something more.

So the Newington native decided to relocate his business to a larger and vacant space in the Best Market Plaza on Lowrey Place. Town government and chamber of commerce officials joined him to celebrate the grand opening the evening of Oct. 18.

"I really wanted to come back to the center," he said.

Garrett's Barber Shop features nine professional hair cutters on staff and a collection of antique barber chairs that date from the 1920s and 1930s.

He said each one comes with a story and one of the chairs appeared in a scene from the 1973 motion picture "The Seven-Ups" starring Roy Scheider.

Kenny, 35, grew up in town and talked about spending his early years in an apartment complex that is walking distance from his newly relocated business. He always wanted to help people look good.

"I took hairdressing in technical school and I was licensed by the time I was 17," he said.

Kenny earned his diploma from Goodwin Technical School in New Britain. "We outgrew the other space. We had a line literally out the door every day," he said. "We stay steady all day long."

Most haircuts at Garrett's cost $25, but he said the customer satisfaction rate is so high that people don't mind paying a few dollars more for a top-quality cut.

"We take our time, we don't rush," Kenny said of his staff. "They're talented, they're good. We really pride ourselves on getting it right every time."

Photo by Mark Jahne

Owner Garrett Kenny stands alongside one of the nine antique chairs in his new barber shop. They all date from the 1920s and 1930s.

His shop also offers hot towel shaves and beard trimming. Appointments can be made for an entire wedding party of groomsmen to come in together for a pre-wedding cut and trim.

"I love the retro look and I love that he wanted to come back home," Gail Whitney said.

She is the executive director of the Newington Chamber of Commerce. Whitney also expressed satisfaction with the fact that Kenny chose to locate in the Best Market Plaza, where several vacant storefronts are slowly being occupied by new businesses. **NL**

Garrett's Barber Shop is open Tuesday through Saturday with flexible hours from 8 or 9 a.m. until 5 to 7 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome. Call 860-785-8896 or online at garrettsbarbershop.com.

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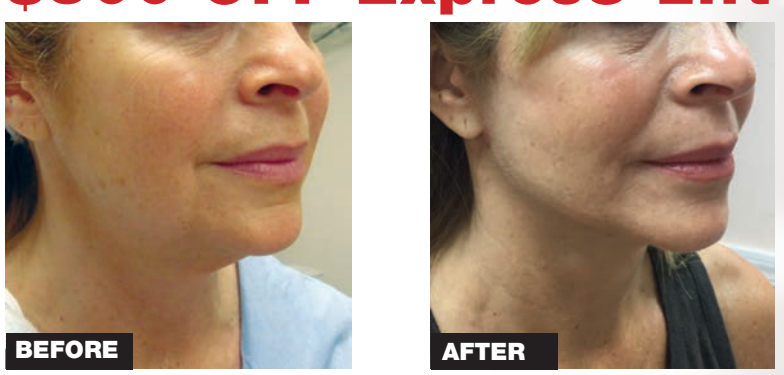

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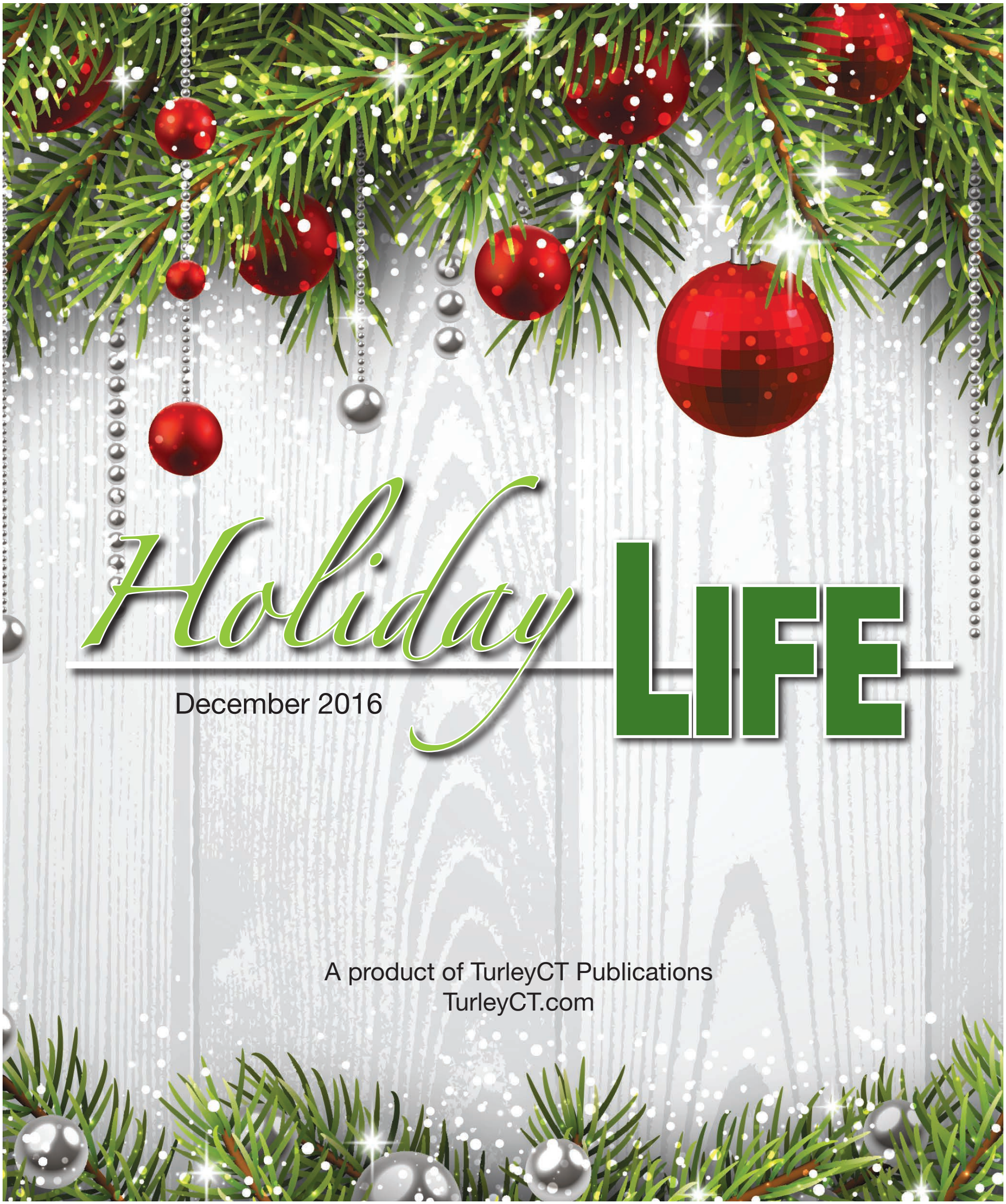
Holiday
LIFE
December 2016
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Holiday LIFE

Rushing through a Winter Wonderland

How to plan for everything that needs to be done this holiday season

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor

On the first day of Christmas you have gotten up at 3 a.m. for the early deals on Black Friday, on the second day of Christmas you have descended upon all the local shops you can think of for Shop Local Saturday and by the third day you are ready to call the whole thing off. Bah humbug!

The holidays are a busy time of year with parties, shopping, arguing with family, mailing cards, sending packages and feeling guilty after

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that third glass of eggnog, two slices of fruit cake and four traditional cookies that you had to eat so Aunt Trudy does not get offended.

It does not have to be that way.

With some planning ahead, the holidays can be more merry than not. Your local LIFE paper has created a list of ideas to help you stay on track and make the next few weeks as peaceful as possible.

Eats

Cooking for a crowd can be stressful and expensive. When opting for a caterer to help make your holiday party as festive and delicious as possible, there are two important, well, three, important things to keep in mind: Set a budget, consider your options ahead of time and book the caterer as soon as possible.

"A budget is definitely key," Tom Sapia, owner of Ascot Catering in Wethersfield, said.

Knowing how much you have to spend will help you prioritize your event and inform the caterer so they know exactly what your expectations are and there are no surprises.

"It's better if you have an idea," Sapia said. The caterer will then scale down the options or expand them depending on how much the host wants to spend and they can plan accordingly.

It is also advised that hosts take a look at the caterer's website or ask for a sample menu. Sapia said, too, it is good, especially if you have never used a caterer before, to talk with people who have.

"See what they do as far as planning their event, what works for them," Sapia said. "Educating yourself on using a caterer is better for you than you can understand. You can understand what the caterer is saying."

Finally, look at a calendar and call to book a date as soon as possible.

For full catering events Sapia said it is best to book two months in advance. For smaller events the deadline can be condensed, but the sooner a date is selected, the better.

"You want to be sure you have it booked so you are not coming down to the wire," Sapia said. "Last minute communication is not always clear. You don't have time to think things through."

For more information call Ascot Catering at 860-529-8889 or visit ascotcatering.com.

O Christmas Tree

For many the tradition of cutting down a Christmas tree is an important holiday ritual. Timing the tree so there is time to enjoy its decorated glory and not end up with a pile of needles come Christmas Eve is a delicate balance.

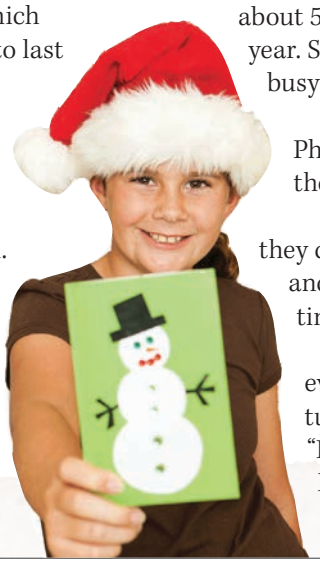
To keep the tree fresh it might be best to cut your own.

Marianne Burbank oversees her family tree farm in Canton Center. This year the farm will not be open the weekend after Thanksgiving, although some years the farm does open then.

The farm will be open the first two weekends in December. The timing relates to how many trees the farm has available as they wait for younger trees to grow.

Cutting your own tree helps to keep it fresh longer. The trees at Cherry Brook Christmas Tree Farm are white spruce, which Burbank said seem to last a bit longer.

"The most important thing is to water it as soon as you can after you cut it," Burbank said. "It's helpful if you put a new slice into the bottom if there has been any time you speak of from the time you cut it until you get it into water."



Placing the tree away from a heat source is not only a safe thing to do, but also helps keep the tree from drying out.

Cherry Brook Christmas Tree Farm is located at 225 Cherry Brook Road in Canton Center. For more information call 860-693-2687 or 860-307-6753.

Cards, cards and more

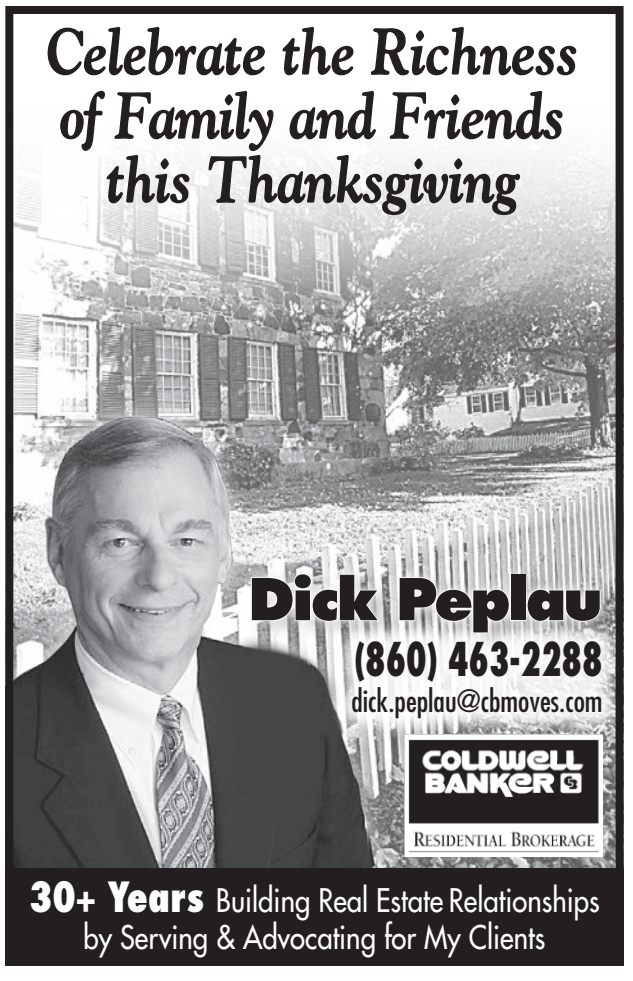
When the family is finally decked in their holiday sweaters and gathered in front of the fireplace for the annual family picture for the holiday card, do not forget to snap that picture quick and get it processed.

Moto Photo in Avon processes about 50,000 holiday cards each year. Staff at the store can be as busy as Santa's Workshop.

Joel Miller, owner of Moto Photo, said this time of year is the busiest for his business.

It is the time of year when they do more cards, photo books and calendars than any other time of year.

"Because we produce everything in house, we don't turn anyone away," Miller said. "But as it gets later in December, you might be best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to send out Happy New Year cards."

For those ordering picture holiday cards, Miller said he presents the customer with the envelopes before the order is even processed. This enables customers to go home and get a head start on addressing envelopes, which can help save time.

Many who are interested in photo cards are waiting until Thanksgiving weekend when the entire family is likely to be home, or they like to wait until the Christmas tree is up or it's cool enough to have a fire in the fireplace. Those who want to get ahead of the rush may want to think of using a family photo that was taken during the summer as a way to get the cards made up faster.

For those who opt to stop in the store, located in Avon Village at 11 East Main St., in Avon, they can pick up a few gifts, too. This can be creating a calendar, printing a photo on metal or wood, creating an ornament, or even archiving old photographs or use them to create a CD or DVD of old home movies.

For more information visit avonmotophoto.com

Gift shopping, wrapping and more

It might be easy to come up with a gift idea for a friend or loved one, but the difficult task comes with finding the time to go and procure the item.

That is where Mind My Life can help. The business serves as an extra set of hands to help client's whittle down their extensive to-do list.

Stephanie Hillyard is just the person to help with holiday party grocery shopping or serve as a shopper to buy the gifts, and wrap them too.

"Oh my gosh, I absolutely love gift-wrapping," Hillyard said. "It was really a big time saver for clients I helped last year."

Hillyard said all it takes is a meeting with a client to go over the list to ensure she knows exactly what the client is looking for and then she gets busy hitting the stores giving her client time to enjoy a holiday party or work on another holiday-related task.

"For me it's a really fun opportunity to help someone out to make their life easier, it's what drives me," Hillyard said.

"I know in the end this is going to free up their time to enjoy their passions and spend more time with family."

Hillyard is also available to assist with holiday cards, helping to select the right card and preparing them to be mailed.

"I assemble everything and drop it in the mail," Hillyard said.

She can also assist with interior decorating, run errands and even help to go through closets to sort out items to donate and bring them to the appropriate collection site.

For those who may need an extra hand, er paw, to help with pets, Hillyard can help there too. It can be as simple as stopping by a client's home to let the dog out.

The one thing a client will need to think about is when to get help. Hillyard said the sooner a client calls, the more effectively she can assist.

"Sooner rather than later, definitely," she said. "So we can sit down together and figure out the best time to accomplish their to-do list. Even if it's last minute things, it's always better to call and see how we can help them."

For more information call Mind My Life at 860-916-3442 or 860-264-6202 or visit mindmylife.com.

Mailing away

Take a deep breath. Mailing packages can be a hassle, but does not have to be with a little thought.

John Hanson, owner of the UPS Store in Simsbury, assured that packages can be mailed Dec. 23, shipped overnight and arrive on the 24th. But, he also said, the sooner the package is in the mail the better. Items can get hung up because of incidental factors he and his company have no control over, such as weather systems in the Midwest. Additionally, shipping overnight

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increases the cost to ship, and where the package is going can impact when it arrives.

"Sending it on the 23rd, distance is a factor," Hanson said. For example, shipping a package on the 23rd to Telluride, Colorado, will not make it.

"You can't even fly there yourself if you left at 6 p.m. on Friday to be there on Saturday," Hanson said.

Other dates to keep in mind, for regular shipping, Hanson said mailing on the 16th to get to the West Coast would be best. Other geographic issues to keep in mind, for items heading to the South, they should be shipped Dec. 19, and for those going to a semicircle in the middle of country from Chicago to Charlotte, send them no later than Dec. 20 and Dec. 22 for anything being sent regular shipping from Bangor, Maine, to Wilmington, Delaware.

Through the years, Hanson has seen a number of issues determine when packages are sent. Some have family members who like to peek, so they wait until the last possible day.

Hanson said, too, that for those sending packages through the United States Postal Service, shipping Dec. 23, for express mail, it would not make it on time.

"You should allow three days for USPS," Hanson said, adding, "You really should allow more than that."

For those who are mailing a package to a service member overseas, Hanson suggest it be shipped no later than Dec. 12.

One other thing to keep in mind, this year Hanukkah begins Dec. 24, so there might be even more items being sent out than normal because the holidays fall at the same time.

The UPS Store, 542 Hopmeadow St., will be open Sundays in December. Call 860-651-5884 or visit theupsstorelocal.com.

Hitting the road

Many families head over the river and through the woods to spend time with family during the holidays. That alone can be stressful, but getting there does not have to be.

Cheryl Kennedy, team leader with Liberty Travel in West Hartford, advised booking holiday travel 10 months ahead of time when flight schedules have been released and travelers have more options.

"The holidays are a busy travel time, so availability for both hotels and airlines are best made well in advance," Kennedy said.

Take a deep breath. For those who waited until later in the year, there is still time to get where you want to go. It will, however, require some flexibility, Kennedy said.

"Flexibility is key with last-minute travel, on all fronts," she said.

Be open-minded when it comes to destinations, airports and flight times.

"The more flexible you are, the better the chances to find a last-minute trip," Kennedy said. "You also have to be realistic about your budget; the combination of holiday travel and last-minute arrangements add to the bottom line."

If flying is not possible, Kennedy noted there are cruise lines that leave out of New York and New Jersey that can help you get to your destination and save on airfare and travel time.

Another option might be to delay travel to the week after the New Year, a time when more deals are available especially due to it being peak season in warmer destinations.

Using a travel agent is a good option when planning a trip. Kennedy said with this time of year and the potential for inclement weather, an agent can better assist should a flight be delayed or canceled.

"Take the advice you are given by your travel consultant, including arriving at the airport plenty of time in advance," Kennedy said. "It is better to be waiting at the airport than book home because you missed your flight."

Double check, too, to ensure you have the appropriate documents and that all the necessary medications have been packed in a carry-on bag.

"Delays are inevitable so plan on them," Kennedy said. "Make sure you pack some snacks and things to keep the children busy if you are traveling with young ones."

Liberty Travel is located at 994 Farmington Ave., West Hartford. **NL**

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Holiday LIFE

Not-so-happy holidays

How to cope with grief when everyone else seems merry and bright

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

"The holidays are just so difficult for the bereaved individual, whether that's Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas or New Year's," said Diana Duksa Kurz of Duksa Family Funeral Homes with a location in Newington. "These are times when everyone's supposed to be happy, everyone's supposed to be enjoying themselves, ... [however] some of the expectations of happiness and joy are unrealistic. Everyone's just overdoing it."

Many who are grieving feel sad, lonely and depressed and just want the holidays to be over.

"It's important to acknowledge how difficult you think it will be," said Lory Nurenberg, a social worker with Vitas Innovative Hospice Care in Glastonbury.

"Preparing in advance with specific plans and surrounding yourself with supportive people can be helpful and offset some of the feelings of emptiness. Although it is therapeutic to allow yourself some time alone to grieve, isolating yourself or canceling the holidays altogether may be counterproductive to your healing," she said.

"On the other hand, taking on more holiday responsibilities than you can emotionally handle can be equally draining and stressful. The key is to find a balance between your need for solitude and the comfort you derive from those you can share your grief and your memories with."

Kurz agreed that planning ahead can be helpful.

"Be proactive. Accept that you have limitations and decide what you do and don't want to do," she said.

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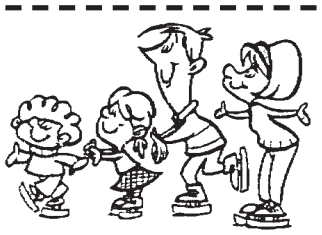
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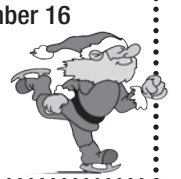

"It's never going to be the same without your loved one, so don't feel pressured to keep all the same traditions. To keep from becoming overwhelmed, consider skipping the baking, decorating the house or sending cards. Pick and choose which holiday invitations to accept.

"Lower your expectations. Don't put so much pressure on yourself," she said.

You can also develop new traditions.

"There are numerous ways to acknowledge the absence of a loved one as part of the holiday event," Nurenberg said. "Some examples include creating a memory box to share, lighting a candle, having each person at the table share a favorite memory, or giving a donation or gift in memory of your loved one."

Kurz said she knows of people who place a single flower in a vase to represent their loved one during the holidays. Offering a toast or a prayer at a holiday meal, or purchasing a gift that may have been for your loved one and then donating it to a charity that is meaningful to you were other examples she offered.

Celebrating on a different day or in a different place are other possibilities.

"It doesn't have to be big things ... but if it feels right for you, then it's important for you to do it," Kurz said. "It's going to be different. You can't think it's going to be the same as before your life changed."

Carefully consider what will work and what won't.

"Take care of yourself. If you can exercise, try to exercise. Eat a properly balanced diet – you need the strength. ... Try to get adequate rest," she said. "Take it slowly. Really take good care of yourself."

Dr. Jeanne Folks, a counselor in Avon with more than 30 years of clinical experience, suggested ways people can be kind to themselves during the holidays.

"There are two primary temptations to resist: socially isolating and forcing yourself to go out and function as if nothing is wrong.

"We do the first because we're in a lot of pain; we don't feel like seeing anyone and we, understandably, don't want reminders that our loved one isn't with us.

"The problem with the first approach, however, is that we'll miss comfort and kindness and reminders that we're not alone.

"The problem with the second approach is that we detach from our feelings, most often thinking we're protecting others. We don't want to spoil their holiday with our sadness."

Rather, Folks said, it's important to "be real, tell the truth and be gentle with yourself."

Using the analogy of a parent encouraging a child to attempt

Resources

Holiday Remembrance Service

December 3 at 4 p.m.

Newington Memorial Funeral Home
29 Bonair Avenue, Newington

This annual non-denominational event is free of charge and includes music, the opportunity to make a decoration to hang on the tree and light refreshments. The event draws about 200 people. For more information, call 860-6666-0600.

Bereavement Support Group

Hebrew HealthCare, Main Campus
1 Abrahms Boulevard, West Hartford

Hebrew HealthCare offers a bereavement support group open to the community for those grieving the loss of a spouse or parent. It meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 4:30-6 p.m. For more information, call Rabbi Daniel Braune-Friedman at 860-523-3859 or email dbraune-friedman@hebrewhealthcare.org.

Grief Support Group

Collinsville Congregational Church
7 South Street, Collinsville 860-693-6333

Churches in the Farmington Valley have begun a non-denominational grief support group for adults who are grieving the loss of a loved one. It meets each Wednesday at 10 a.m. and at 7 p.m. For more information, call the Rev. Jim Wheeler at the number above or send an email to collcong@sbcglobal.net.

Grieving Forward: Surviving the Loss of a Love

784 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford

This free group for the LGBTQ community meets the second Wednesday of each month. For more information, call the Women's Center for Psychotherapy at 860-523-4450 x51.

GriefNet.org

This Internet community of persons dealing with grief, death and major loss has more than 50 email grief support groups and two websites. There are abundant resources on specific topics for both adults and children, including an extensive book list and the ability to create a memorial.

Grieving.com

This site offers more than 30 forums for grief support, including specific groups for loss of a child, parent, sibling, pet and friend as well as forums for those grieving a miscarriage, suicide, violent death, divorce and war. One specifically deals with the holidays.

some new, difficult task, she suggested say to yourself, "I'm just going to show up at that event. If it gets to be too much, I can always leave."

You can tell your host or hostess in advance that you'll be putting in an appearance, but don't know how long you'll stay. You can also ask if there's a quiet room in their house you could go to be alone for a little while if needed.

"If you can withdraw and return to interaction at the event, you may be able to stay longer, if that's your goal," she said.

It's important to understand grief isn't linear, she said, explaining, "You may feel fine one minute, even laughing, and feel a spasm of grief the next. Part of the reason grief is so very hard is because it is so powerful and unpredictable."

Know, too, that you don't have to protect others from your grief.

"If you suddenly feel tears come, you won't ruin anything," Folks said. "It's you having the courage to keep your heart open. Make it clear to others that they don't need to do anything. There's no emergency. There's nothing to fix."

There is no right way or wrong way to grieve as you manage the best you can.

Being aware there will be physical and emotional responses to a loss, and that each is OK is important, Kurz said,

Emotional responses include sadness, disbelief, loneliness, guilt, anxiety, anger, nightmares, a lack of concentration, fear and being preoccupied with thoughts of the deceased.

Physical responses can include difficulty breathing, headaches, a change in eating habits, a lack of energy, insomnia and skin rashes.

"It's not unnatural; be prepared for these things to come up during these times," Kurz said. "Be ready for these things to be part of the person you are now, for a while at least. Accept there will be times you feel sad or depressed or anxious.

"It's also OK to feel good. A lot of people feel guilty if they find themselves enjoying an activity. It's OK to laugh, to feel good. It's your own body's way to help you relax and gain some strength, if only for a few moments. You're not being disrespectful to the memory of the person you've lost."

Kurz encourages giving yourself space to cry.

"You don't need to be strong. It's OK to cry. Crying is a wonderful outlet. ... It tends to reduce stress and calm anxiety."

She also encourages people to find someone they can turn to, be it a friend, a clergy member, a relative or a professional.

To those who know someone is grieving, Folks urges, "Don't studiously avoid the topic of a person's loss. Ignoring loss is ignoring the bereaved, leaving them to feel isolated and alone."

Noting that all grief is unique and the holidays are an especially difficult time, the Rev. Jim Wheeler of Collinsville Congregational Church said that many people may benefit from a grief support group.

The faith community in the Farmington Valley has begun a weekly non-denominational group that meets each Wednesday both at 10 a.m. and again at 7 p.m. at the church at 7 South St., Collinsville.

"It's not therapy, it's grief support," he said. "You can just listen if you wish or express what you want. Most of all, the aims to have it be in a place where you can share your story and relive happy memories."

Noting there are a number of support groups throughout Central Connecticut, Kurz invited people to call the funeral home at 860-666-0600 so that information on specific programs that best suit the needs could be provided.

Some are affiliated with hospitals or hospice and visiting nurse associations, some are faith based and offered through churches, and others are more focused, tending to the needs of those struggling with certain types of loss, such as suicide, drugs, cancer or the loss of a child.

A selection of books or DVDs are also available from the facility's grief library, she said. **NL**

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Holiday LIFE

Cookie Disaster

Undercooked and overdone

Fixing holiday culinary disasters

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

The holidays are a time for family, friends and great food. That combination can be a cause of stress for even the most experienced of cooks. Multi-course meals for a crowd, often consisting of dishes that are only made a few times a year, are a recipe for mishaps. If you're the type of cook who tends to stay up nights worrying about the "what ifs," professionals do have a few ideas how to handle – or avoid – some of the biggest holiday cooking disasters.

If you usually cook for a handful of people and are suddenly cooking for a crowd, figuring out how much to make could be a trick. Add in the fact that your cousin never bothers to RSVP and your son might bring an extra friend and you can't not invite your co-worker who doesn't have anywhere else to go, and planning becomes even more daunting.

"To avoid not having enough food in case you have surprise visitors, we always like to plan for the unexpected," said Tom Sapia, executive chef at Ascot Catering in Wethersfield. "Prepare enough food for five to 10 people over your actual guest count. You may be left with extra food, but who doesn't love leftovers? This will ensure you have food for all to go around and leave you with peace of mind that if you do have surprise guests, they will leave your house full."

Once you've determined you have enough food, getting it to the table at the same time can be a challenge. Obviously that starts with making sure you leave yourself

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Holiday LIFE

"A good plan would be to bake cookies and desserts before the holidays during a calm, stress-free time. Put some music on, have a beverage nearby, and enjoy baking a batch or two of your favorites."
– Nancy Hayden

enough time to cook everything, which begins with thawing key ingredients, such as the turkey.

Of course, it's not unheard of for a cook to realize that it's the big day and the big bird isn't thawed in time to go in the oven.

"Place [the turkey] in a large pot with [the] chest cavity up and run cold water inside the cavity until a meat thermometer easily pierces the flesh. Drain, pat dry and dress your bird in your favorite family way. Then bake as directed," Louise Albin, president of Cafe Louise Catering with locations in West Hartford and Newington at Indian Hill Country Club, recommended. "If it will delay your meal, then make sure you have plenty of Prosecco and delicious wine and hors d'oeuvres to help pass the time in a most enjoyable way."

Matthew Jorgensen, owner/chef of Picnic Basket Catering in Cromwell, said making sure your main course is cooked is the most important aspect.

"If you're doing a Thanksgiving Day turkey and everything is done except the turkey, you have problems. Try to prepare what takes the longest and use that as your base time, so when your turkey is done, then you can start warming the squash," he said. "If we're talking about a traditional Thanksgiving Day dinner or roasts and long cook items, make sure those are done first. Let's say the turkey is done and you're waiting for the popovers or the squash to finish, then it's not as much of a disaster."

He said it's fine to be honest with your guests that one dish isn't ready.

"Hopefully, you have a good group of people. You can say we can either wait [until it's ready] or go into dinner and maybe it will be done in 15 minutes. If everything is done except one thing, just go in and serve dinner. You kind of have to go with the flow," Jorgensen said.

And don't beat yourself up.

"Timing is difficult. I see people preparing

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meals and I feel sorry for them, because they're trying to get all of this stuff cooked and done," he noted.

He recommends cooking whatever you can a couple of days in advance if possible, especially if it's an item that will take a long time to cook. And if you end up having the sweet potatoes with marshmallows for dessert, so what?

"You have to go with the flow, laugh about it, have a drink," he advised.

Sometimes, undercooking isn't the problem. You've simply let the vegetables boil too long and now they're mushy.

If you've overcooked the veggies, Jeanne Mainville Denalsky, co-owner of Pastels Catering in Simsbury, has a tasty solution: Add cheese!

"Veggies like potatoes, broccoli or cauliflower go 'au gratin' by topping with breadcrumbs [and] adding grated cheese and butter," she suggested.

Try layering the vegetables in a baking dish, topping them with cheese and baking at 350 degrees until the cheese melts. Ovens vary, but she said it should take about seven to 10 minutes.

"Another option for overcooked veggies would be to add EVOO, sea salt and cracked pepper, and serve over pasta. Top with grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese," she said. "Or, make a vegetable soup."

With options like that, no one has to know that you were originally planning to serve the broccoli sans sauce.

Of course, some items are a little more challenging to camouflage, and here again, planning ahead can help you avoid trouble.

Nancy Hayden, the "cookie goddess" of Ginger & Pickles Cookies & Classes in Glastonbury, said that desserts can be made far in advance of the holidays.

"A good plan would be to bake cookies and desserts before the holidays during a calm, stress-free time. Put some music on, have a beverage nearby, and enjoy baking a batch or two of your favorites. Another day, bake another batch. Cookies freeze really well for up to three months, and they thaw out nicely in a few hours," she said.

"Cakes are easy to make ahead. Bake the layers. When cool, wrap them in plastic wrap and freeze for up to a month."

She said that even most frostings can be made a few days ahead. Just whip them lightly before using to refresh the frosting.

Cheesecakes also freeze well, according to Hayden. Just bake, cool, wrap in plastic and freeze. Thaw them overnight in the fridge.

"One more holiday favorite, pie, can be made and frozen, uncooked! The frozen pie can be placed in the oven without thawing. It may require just a few extra minutes to cook," Hayden noted.

If it's any consolation, even the professionals sometimes goof.

"Baking is really a science. All the stars have to be aligned, from correct solids to liquids, baking temps, preheats, humidity factors etc.," noted Peggi Camosci of Tea Roses Tea Room in Cromwell.

"When I tried my first hand at making French macarons, they came out pretty decent. I started researching all the techniques so I could improve my batch, but with all the fussing to improve, my next batch never rose, they just flattened. They still tasted delicious, so I sprinkled them with powdered sugar and served them as 'melted snowmen.' They were a hit."

She said that her strategy could be used beyond macarons.

"So my strategy to save my desserts consists of renaming them and sprinkling lots of powdered sugar. [It] makes most desserts look yummy," she said.

Having a sense of humor, like Camosci, definitely makes things go more smoothly.

And if that doesn't work, Jorgensen from Picnic Basket Catering has a foolproof method.

"With the holidays, I find cranberry margaritas help." NL

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Exercise the Right Choice

New program provides educational, fun environment on Teacher Tuesdays

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

On 16 Tuesdays throughout the year, students are released from school early to provide teachers and staff with adequate time for professional development.

Thanks to a new program created by the town Parks and Recreation Department, this doesn't mean that these children spend the afternoon with nothing to do. For the first time, Parks and Recreation has implemented a program called Exercise the Right Choice on those days informally known as "Teacher Tuesdays."

"The ERC in the name also stands for Education, Recreation and Cultural Arts," Parks and Recreation Superintendent William DeMaio said. "Those are the three things we really want to achieve with this."

He said Exercise the Right Choice seeks to fill a void where there had previously been another program operated by the Board of Education to help parents who needed the extra child care on those days.

"The Board of Ed used to have some kind of program during these days, but it go cut due to budgets," DeMaio said. "Now, we don't have any money either, but we have the opportunity to charge for this program."

The program costs parents $240 for all 16 Tuesdays in the academic year and runs until 5 p.m. Each elementary school hosts its own program and each location also has its own paid director as well as three or four other trained and CPR-certified staffers.

Volunteers from Newington High School attended the Exercise the Right Choice program to create art with students.

"We have a range of people running the program. We have a paraprofessional, a grad student and a lot of our staff is made up of students at Central or Manchester Community College," Joseph Harvey, the new recreation program specialist, said. "They're usually education majors, special ed majors or physical education majors."

At each program, students are given opportunities for recreation and school work. DeMaio said that it is the cultural and educational guests they bring in who make Exercise the Right Choice something special.

"We try to bring experts into the program," he said. "We started with an African drummer who brings about 50 drums."

After that presentation DeMaio,

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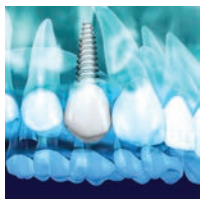
Are Dental Implants Right For You?

Replacing teeth with dental implants can be an excellent option for patients to restore lost function and recreate a great-looking smile for those that have suffered from tooth loss. Implants are titanium posts inserted into the jawbone to replace the root portion of a missing tooth, which fuse with the bone, keeping it living and stimulated and your face youthfully supported. Dental implants serve as a foundation for highly natural-looking and functional tooth replacements, and can be used to replace a single tooth up to a full set of top and bottom teeth, now one of Dr. Michalski's top procedures, the "All on 4" fixed implant bridge. This innovative concept uses as few as four implants to replace a full arch of teeth. Because he is also a cosmetic dentist, Dr. Michalski has the unique ability to plan both the surgery and the final smile design. The procedure replaces the problem teeth and the IV sedation he offers creates a relaxed experience.

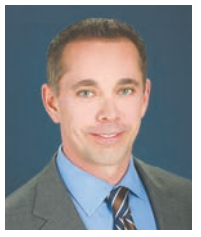
Since your jaw, teeth and bones have individual characteristics, Dr. Michalski uses his in-house CT scanner for precise implant measurement and 3-dimensional visualization to fully understand the structure of each person's jaw. Combining his expertise and advanced equipment, he is able to locate the best bone structure and choose the ideal implant placement sites for the patient. "Through this procedure we take implant dentistry a step above," says Dr. Michalski. "We take teeth out and the same day put teeth in. We provide our patients with IV sedation and they wake up with new teeth."



As one of his advanced procedures is dental implants, Dr. Michalski is a leader in his field. He has attained Diplomate status in the International College of Oral Implantology, the highest honor in the field. He is a Misch Fellow, a graduate of numerous post doctorate training curriculums and has trained and studied with the best implant surgeons in the world.

"I am able to show people what their dental implant options are and change their lives. We use art and science to take a patient from a smile they dislike to one they love by creating their perfect smile," explains Dr. Michalski.

Dr. Michalski is accepting new patients. Appointments for evaluations and consultations are available on weekdays and may be made by calling 860-563-4544, or visiting the website www.michalskidmd.com



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"We wanted to have mentors come down for these kids. It emphasizes the need for reading and it motivates them to be a good student and a good athlete."

– William DeMaio

Harvey and the others on staff were able to bring in the Amazing Andy, a magician who taught juggling and magic tricks. Next up is Todd Powers of Jock in the Box Entertainment, a professional disc jockey company.

"He actually teaches them how to be a DJ," DeMaio said. "Then after that, he tries to determine who's pretty good at it and then we take those kids and we give them 10 minutes of stardom to DJ at a middle school dance."

While keeping the children entertained is a big part of the program, providing an educational environment is also important. DeMaio and Harvey worked with Christopher Meyers, the athletic director at Newington High School, to arrange for high school athletes to also become involved.

"On Oct. 18, we had captains from every fall sport at Newington High School come down and read a book," Harvey said. "They've already said they want to come back again."

"We wanted to have mentors come down for these kids," DeMaio added. "It emphasizes the need for reading and it motivates them to be a good student and a good athlete."

While providing an environment for education, recreation and cultural arts is important, he emphasized that the program also acts as a comfortable and secure place for students who may otherwise need to go home alone on those days.

"We're keeping these kids in a safe environment," he said.

This year is the first attempt at a program like this and both DeMaio and Harvey said that they are taking extensive time to reflect and gather feedback on how to improve and grow the program.

"I think this could be a good indicator for us," DeMaio said. "If parents enjoy it as much as we think they do right now, this could be something we think about expanding. This could be an introduction to a more comprehensive after-school program."

Each program has a maximum capacity of 50 students and DeMaio said there are still openings available at all four public elementary schools for interested students and parents.

"It's a safe place for young people," DeMaio said. "There's nothing bad about that. It's all good." **NL**

For more information, or to register, contact Parks and Recreation at 860-665-8666.

The captains of the fall sports teams at Newington High School volunteered to read a book to students at the Exercise the Right Choice Program.

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera

1.

2.

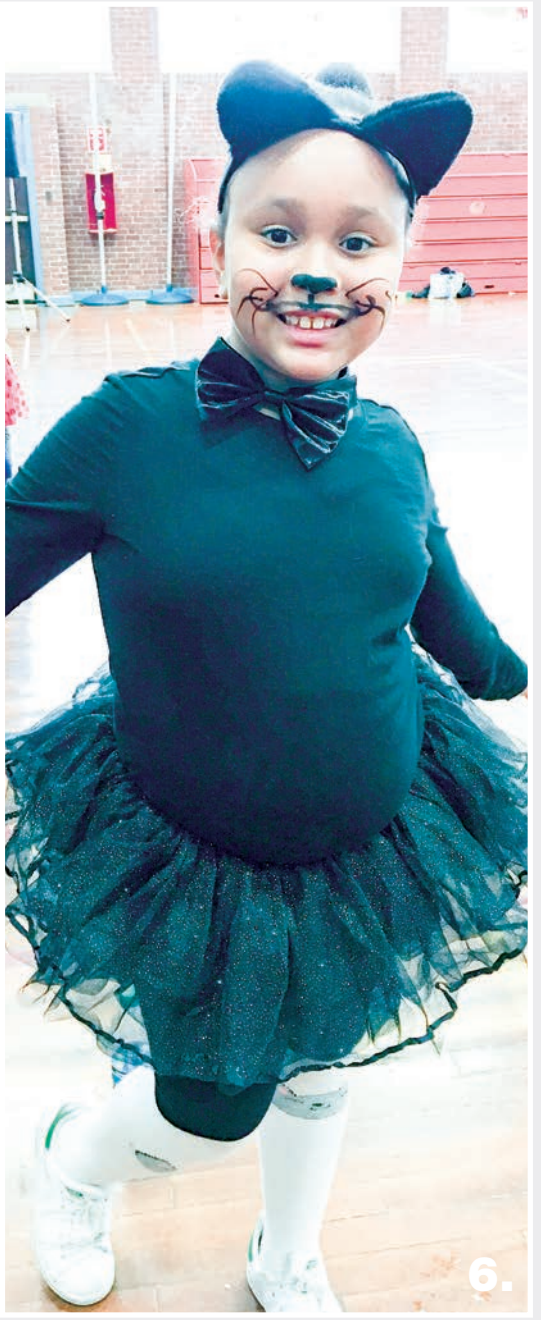
3.

4.

Halloween party draws children to town hall

Newington Parks and Recreation hosted its annual Halloween party Oct. 29 at the Mortensen Community Center in town hall. The event welcomed more than 200 children for a costume parade, pumpkin carving contest, candy corn guessing competition and various activities. **1.** Friends and family came together in their costumes. From left are Alena Medes, 5; Eva Mendes, 7; Demari Foster-Salters, 4; Mikobin Foster-Salters, 7 and Luke Tarallo, 5. **2.** Seven-year-old Naomi Stowers had her face painted to match her costume. **3.** Seven-year-old James Salvadori, left, and 8-year-old Raphael Assis showed off their powerful sides. **4.** Emily, left, and Lucy Catter, both 3, arrived dressed as a police officer and a princess. **5.** Newington High School volunteers, from left, Julia Mazur, 15, Arayana Bracken, 17, and Sophia Maselli, 15, helped children create a variety of Halloween-themed crafts. **6.** Haviland Diaz, 7, spent much of her time dancing around the gym floor. **7.** Five-year-old Molly Zocco was all smiles as she waited in line for a balloon animal. **8.** Eight-year-old Siena Beqiraj, left, and 9-year-old Ryan Zogu loved getting to spend the day with friends. **9.** High school volunteers Katie Cronin, 18, and Leah Sanderson, 16, staffed the snack room.

9.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Events spotlight

Fall Book Sale

Nov. 18-20
Newington Senior & Disabled Center
120 Cedar St.
860-665-8700 or newingtonct.gov/library

The Friends of the Library will hold their fall book sale on Friday from 5:30-8:30 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 3 p.m. All types of books will be on sale as well as CDs, audio books, DVDs, videos and specially priced items. Admission on Friday evening is $5 and free on Saturday. On Sunday, only books will be available. Buy a Friends green bag for $7 and fill it with books for free. Refills are $6.

UNICO Clothing Drive

Nov. 19, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Newington Senior & Disabled Center
120 Cedar St.

The Newington Chapter of UNICO will hold its fifth Annual Warm Winter Clothing Drive to benefit Newington Human Services. New and gently used coats, jackets, hoodies, sweatshirts, sweatpants, hats, scarves and sweaters for men, women and children will be accepted. UNICO's annual food drive will be held at the same time. Non-perishable food items will be accepted.

A Tribute to Whitney Houston

Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.
Infinity Hall
32 Front St., Hartford
cthumane.org/adopt

Grammy Award-winning Hartford native Charmagne Tripp brings the soulful sounds of Whitney Houston to the city with the intent to raise funds and awareness for the Newington-based Connecticut Humane Society. All proceeds will be donated to homeless pets being cared for by CHS at its three shelters in Newington, Waterford and Westport. Tickets start at $24 and can be purchased by visiting infinityhall.com.

Thanksgiving Classic Football Game

Nov. 23, 6 p.m.
Alumni Field, Newington High School

The annual Thanksgiving clash between Newington High School and Wethersfield High School comes to town this year. Pre-sale tickets are $5 for adults and $2 for students 18 and younger. All tickets will be $5 at the gate on the evening of the event. Pre-game tickets will be sold both at both schools Nov. 21 and 22 during school hours. There will be a shuttle service provided for additional parking.

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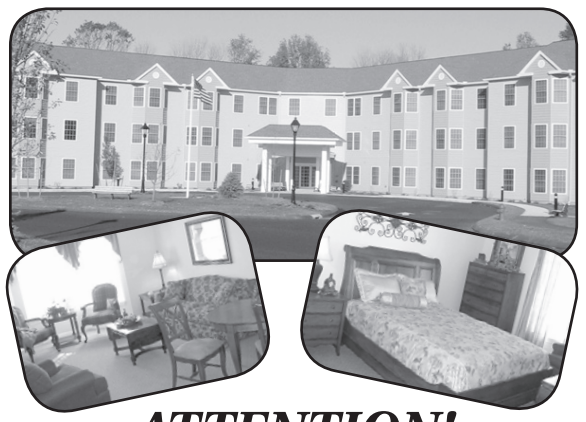

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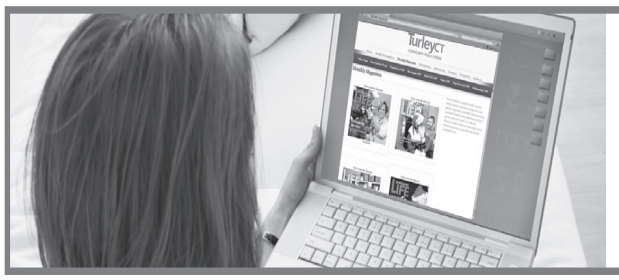

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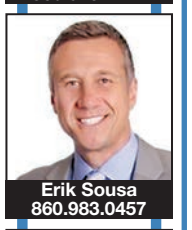
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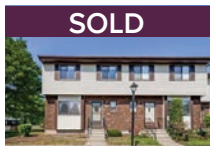
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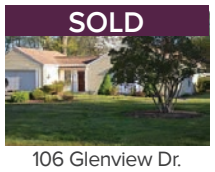
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It is at this time of year we stop to reflect on our many blessings. We give thanks for family, friends, and our good fortunes.
Thank you to all my many clients over the years and may you enjoy your Thanksgiving and some time off to be with friends and family.

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CATHY ROSSINI LAPIERRE JOINS WETHERSFIELD OFFICE

Debra Raymond, manager of the Wethersfield office, is pleased to announce Cathy Rossini Lapierre to our team. Coming from 21 years of teaching special education before beginning her real estate career 3 years ago, Cathy has found that her set of skills have nicely overlapped. Both the top 10 skills of an excellent teacher and the top 10 skills of an excellent real estate agent include organization, patience, compassion, optimism and tenacity! Cathy fits that bill!

Cathy grew up in Wethersfield with her two sisters Christina and Cindy, where her family name holds notoriety. Her parents, Jim and Pegi Rossini, owned the Wethersfield Car Wash for many years and were very active in various organizations in town, including the Bud and Blossom Garden Club and Unico.

She resides in Newington now, where she lives with her husband Tom Lapierre and their two children Jay and Jackie. Tom has served over 30 years in the Newington Volunteer Fire Department and is now the assistant chief of the department.

Cathy and her family are avid skiers with their children being competitive racers for Mount Southington. Tom and Cathy are the co-presidents of the ski team's parents' association.

Cathy is perfect for your real estate needs: organized, detailed, patient and tenacious! Call her and welcome her aboard as well as to our William Raveis Family!

Cathy Rossini Lapierre can be reached at 860-982-2975.

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News roundup

1.

Rotarians distribute dictionaries

1. Members of the Newington Rotary Club once again chose October as the month to provide every third-grader in the Newington Public Schools with his or her personal dictionary. Several Rotarians attended an assembly at Elizabeth Green School to explain the importance of dictionaries and why the organization feels so passionate about a community service project it first introduced to the town in 2007.

Hundreds of dictionaries were also distributed at Ruth Chaffee, John Paterson and Anna Reynolds elementary schools, as well as the Emmanuel Christian Academy.

2.

David Johnson, co-chairman of the project, is shown helping to unpack the dictionaries for distribution. He owns the local GEICO insurance agency.

Promoting electric cars

2. Local political leaders participated in the "Discover the Power of Electric Cars" event hosted by CT Electric Car Oct. 8 in town. State Rep. Gary Byron, Mayor Roy Zartarian and local business leaders were on hand to congratulate owner Ed Ingalls on the third anniversary of the state's first EV charging station showroom.

The event was held CT Electric Car, a subsidiary of Newington

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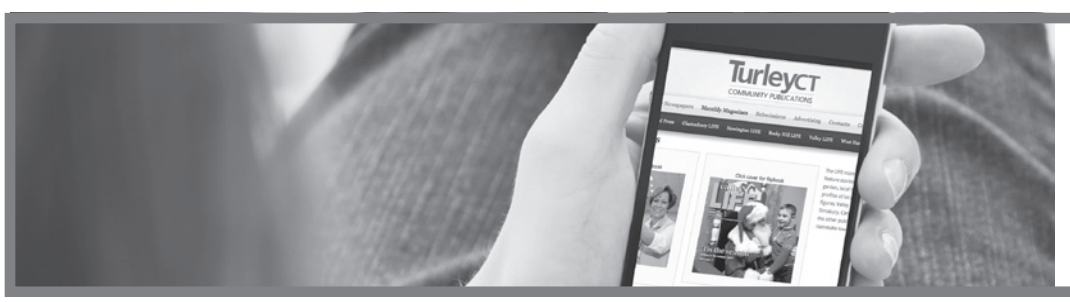

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Electric. Attendees learned all about the latest options in home charging systems and rebates for EVs, then checked out some electric cars, including two Teslas. Shown are, from left, April Pelletier, general manager of CT Electric Car; Byron, Ingalls and Zartarian.

Squares for South Africa

The GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club sends crocheted or knitted squares to South Africa, where Afghans are completed for orphans living with AIDS. The 8-inch by 8-inch squares with a 36-inch tail are given to the Kascare organization, which forwards them to South Africa for completion.

Connecticut International Outreach Chairman Mary Hannifan heads up this project. Last year, the local club won an award from the General Federation of Women's Clubs at its district meeting for the 1,875 squares collected for this effort.

Health district turns 20

3. The Central Connecticut Health District is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The district serves Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield. It began as a district serving only the latter two towns.

In the two decades since its inception the number of people served has increased from 52,000 to 97,000. The district is governed by a 13-member board of health and has a staff of eight full-time and three part-time employees.

EMTs respond to calls

Newington Emergency Medical Services responded to 137 emergency calls during the month of September. A total of 125 were handled by the on-duty crew and the remainder by volunteers responding from home to staff the second ambulance.

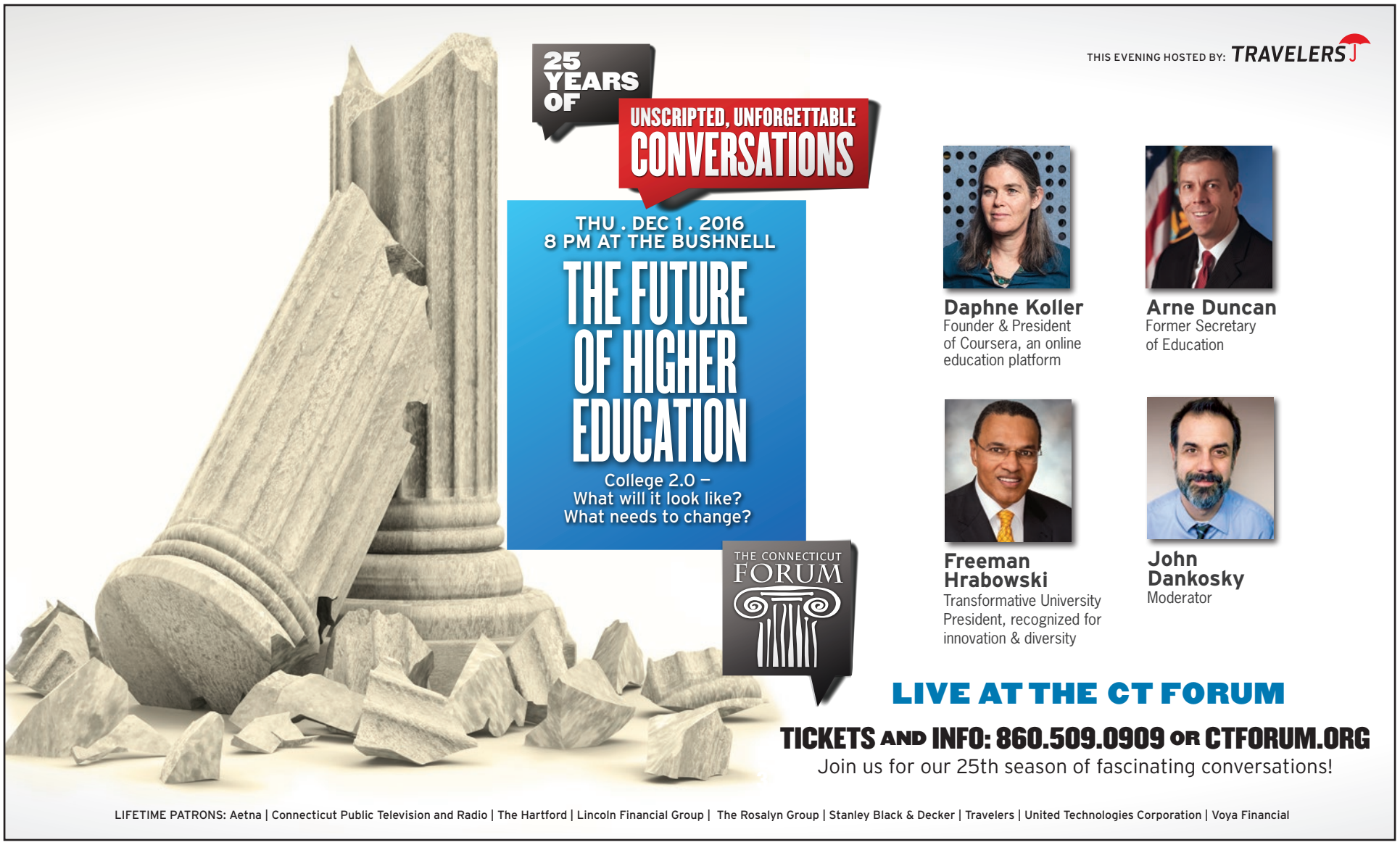
There were 42 basic life support transports and 50 advanced life support transports. NEMS staff volunteered 1,148 hours of their times to serve the community.

Parks and Recreation sells Christmas ornaments

Newington Parks and Recreation is selling Christmas ornaments for the upcoming holiday season. Money raised will support the department as well as the Extravaganza fireworks fund.

The red ornaments cost $5 and bear the department's logo. They can be purchased at the Parks and Recreation office in town hall. All ornaments come in a gift box and quantities are limited. For more information call 860-665-8666 or see its Facebook page.

4.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Unified Sports honored

4. The CIAC athletic conference named Newington High School a Unified Champion Banner School. This is a national award sponsored by Special Olympics International for schools that offer Unified Sports that combine athletes with special needs with their mainstream peers.

NHS Athletic Director Christopher Meyers said the program has shown that it serves as a model, not only for Connecticut, but for high schools throughout the country. NHS Unified Sports will be recognized during a ceremony Dec. 9 at the Unified Leadership Summit at the Aetna in Hartford.

Birthright gets funding

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of the Archdiocese of Hartford recently presented Birthright with a check for $13,512.50 funded in part through the Archbishop's Annual Appeal Vicariate Outreach Program.

The funding will help Birthright continue its mission of providing love, hope and encouragement to mothers facing unplanned

4.

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WETHERSFIELD
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860.563.3110

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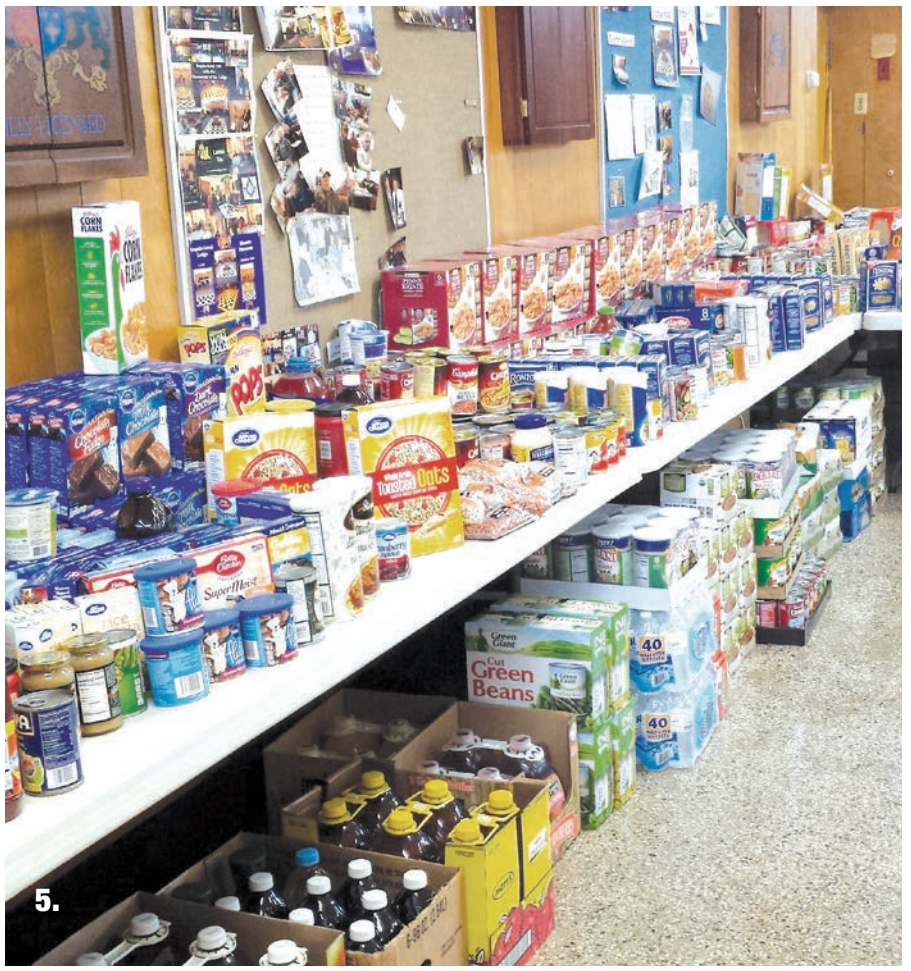
860.563.3510



5.

pregnancies. This includes free pregnancy tests, emotional support, and non-judgmental help with clothing, diapers, and other baby essentials, as well as some emergency household costs.

Birthright provides referrals to essential community services and information on pregnancy, child birth, prenatal development and parenting skills. For more information visit Birthright at 100 Market Square or call 860-665-0234.

Mountains of food

5. Members of Sequin-Level Lodge 140, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Newington, recently capped off a month-long food drive to benefit the town's food pantry. The Masons collected 4,330 pounds of nonperishable food items.

Kellogg students sing at choir festival

6. A handful of students from Martin Kellogg Middle School participated in a Middle School Honor Choir Oct. 29 hosted by the Connecticut chapter of the American Choral Director's Association. Martin Kellogg Choral Director Jessica Bocola has been a member of this professional organization for eight years and this marks the third year in a row Newington was represented at the statewide conference.

The students were hand-selected by Bocola based on their enthusiasm for music, their high interest in singing, and their overall commitment to growing as young musicians. Once selected, they met with her periodically to rehearse in the month leading up to the festival.

Most of the preparation for the one-day event was done by the students themselves, rehearsing at home through the use of rehearsal tracks and performance examples.

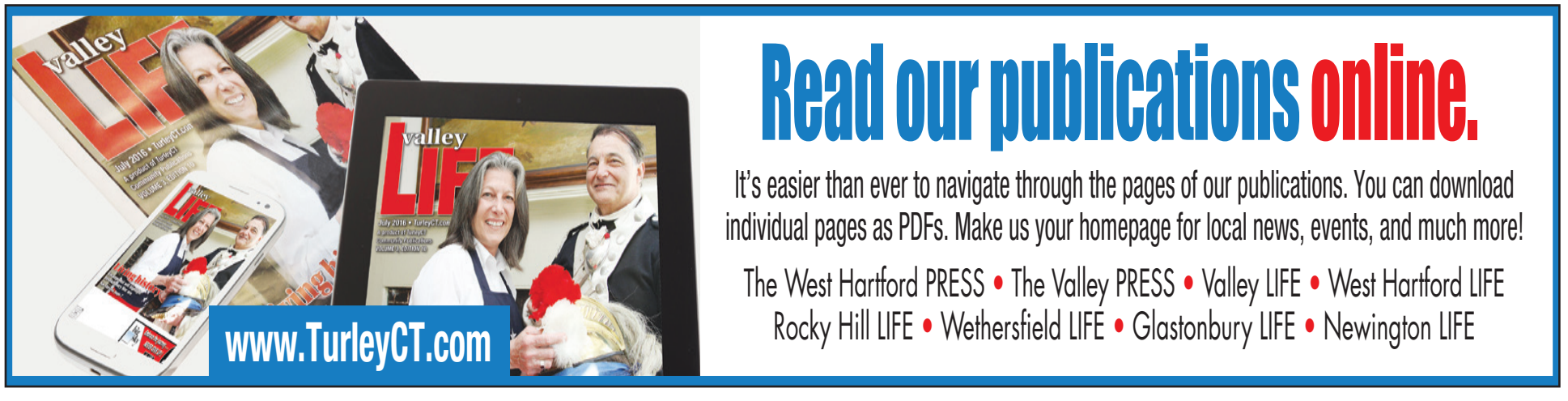
6.

Students present at conference

Two students from John Paterson School were selected to present one of two student expos at the 2016 CECA/CASL Conference "Reimagine Learning."

The Connecticut Educators Computer Association and Connecticut Association of School Libraries conference is a place where teachers and librarians come together to explore and learn about new tools, resources, and educational experiences that they can implement in classrooms, schools and districts throughout the state.

Armed with their Chromebooks provided through the school district's 1:1 technology program, Joseph Gionfriddo and Noah Borrup, both fourth-graders at Paterson, led a 45-minute interactive presentation via live video chat at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville on Oct. 25. **NL**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December calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1 Brown Bag It with a Book, noon, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8700 or newingtonct.gov/library

Tech 4 U, 1:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 5:30 p.m. Dec. 8

Evening Book Discussion Planning Meeting, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

2 Hour of Code Showcase, 6:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

3 ReDefined READS – Holiday Picture Frames, 10 a.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

6 Play with Us, 10:15 a.m., for families of young children who have special needs, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also Dec. 13 and 20

Movers and Shakers: A Musical Storytime, noon, for ages 2-4 and a caregiver, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

A Good Deal: the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Adirondacks, 1 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

7 Just a Story and a Song, 10:15 a.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also Dec. 14, 21 and 28

The Joy of Coloring: An Adult Coloring Group, 2 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 6:30 p.m. Dec. 19

8 MS Support Group, noon to 2 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-667-1314 or 860-236-2751

Winter Craft Night, 6 p.m., for ages 4 and older, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Teen Winter Craft Night, 6 p.m., for grades 6-12, registration recommended, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Psoriasis Support Group, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

10 Construction Club, 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Weihnachten (Christmas) Concert, 3 p.m., Hartford Saengerbund, 719 North Mountain Road, 860-953-8967 or hartford-saengerbund.org

12 Teen Winter Jewelry Workshop, 6 p.m., for grades 6-12, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

National Alliance on Mental Illness, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-205-9542 or 860-830-2129

13 Movies and More, "Miracles from Heaven," 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Half-Day Fun, 2:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

14 Junior Cookbook Club, 6:30 p.m., for grades K-2, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Newington Now App, 6:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

15 Cozytime Stories, 4 p.m., for grades K-2, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Throwback Holiday Crafting: Making CD Ornaments, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Tech Troubleshooting with Teens, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

17 Tales to Tails, 1 p.m., read to a certified therapy dog, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

20 Stories and Art, noon, for ages 2-4 and a caregiver, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

21 Cookbook Club, 6:30 p.m., for grades 3-6, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

27 Wonderful World of Music, 1:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Pop Up Kitchen – Cookies, 6:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club, 6:30 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-666-4371

28 Chess Club, 4 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

29 Winter Fun, 1 p.m., for grades 1-4, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

30 Cinema City, 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

31 A Family New Year's Eve Celebration, 11:15 a.m., for ages 3-6, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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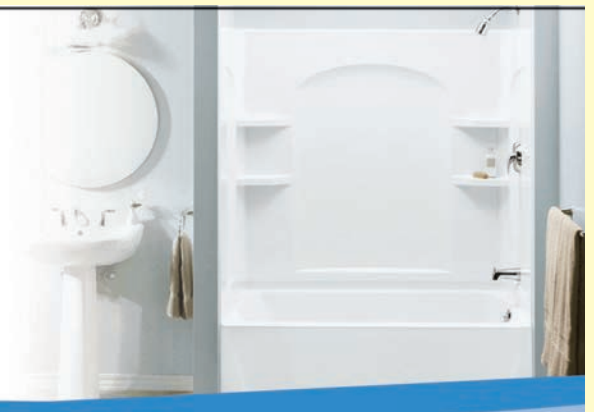

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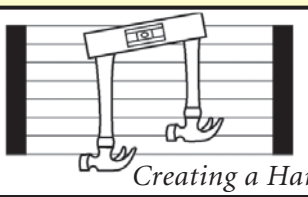

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Editorial

Remember to shop small this holiday season

As the hustle and bustle of the holiday season gets underway, it's important to remember the "little guy" when stocking up on stocking stuffers and piling up items to put under the tree.

The holiday season is a time when hearts are full of joy and shopping bags are full of goodies, and as we gather around dinner tables to give thanks for whatever our blessings may be, remember to show your appreciation for the small businesses that strengthen our communities.

The shopping holiday known as Small Business Saturday is held the Saturday after Thanksgiving during one of the busiest shopping periods of the year, falling in between Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Instead of focusing on big retailers and e-commerce stores, Small Business Saturday encourages shoppers to make purchases small, local businesses. This year's Small Business Saturday falls on Nov. 26.

The holiday was founded by American Express and first held in 2010. According to the official Small Business Saturday website, the U.S. Senate officially recognized the holiday in 2011.

American Express stresses that the event is not meant to discourage people from shopping at larger chains or online retailers, but instead serves to encourage consumers to dedicate a portion of their holiday shopping budget to local businesses.

Neighborhood champions work to bolster awareness of the day and gain support among customers. They are business associations, state and local chambers of commerce, and other community organizers who are willing to commit to organizing events or activities to rally their neighborhoods for Small Business Saturday, according to the American Express website.

The champions receive event kits with branded merchandise meant to encourage patrons to think locally and shop small.

Statistically, small businesses give an average of 250 percent more in donations to local nonprofit groups than larger retailers give.

Leon Davidoff of The Paper Station, a stationery and gift shop, is the neighborhood champion of Small Business Saturday for the town of Newington.

"Small local business owners are your friends and neighbors who rely on the community support to be successful," he said. "As the co-owner of a small, independent retailer, it truly makes a difference to shop local during the holiday season and throughout the year."

Small business owners live and work in the local community. They are parents of local students, volunteers at local community events and familiar faces around town.

"The character of our retail shopping districts are enhanced with a mix of small retailers," Davidoff noted.

It's true: what would our community be like if there were no small businesses? The landscape would not be the same without the small shops that make each town unique.

Small retailers offer personal service and quality products at fair prices.

In addition, they offer the opportunity to reinvest in the community. When you shop at a small business, you support a local person or family who has undoubtedly supported local organizations, Scout troops, youth sports teams or other initiatives tenfold before.

Make a big impact this holiday season and remember to shop small. **NL**

Newington LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

Winter storm names...

If you've lived in Connecticut long enough, you'll remember Blizzard Larry, the Blizzard of '78. Or, perhaps the big ice storm of December 1973 named Felix. More recently, we had to deal with Storm Alfred in late October of 2011 when heavy, wet snow caused a record power outage in Connecticut. And, it was Blizzard Charlotte that dumped up to 40" of snow on the state in 2013. Yes, people remember names, especially the ones that have been attached to Connecticut's biggest winter storms.

Naming winter storms is something unique to WFSB and dates back to the days of the Travelers Weather Service in 1971, with a team of meteorologists broadcasting weather information on Channel 3 and other media outlets. It's a tradition our station is proud to carry on here in the state of Connecticut – now 45 years later!

In order for a storm to get a name, it has to meet certain criteria: we must expect at least 6" of snow for much of the state, and/or ½" of ice accretion (that would be a significant ice storm).

When it comes to the list of names, we like a good theme – previously we've done "current day chart toppers" ...and "former First Ladies" ...this year, we're going with notable sports figures with ties to Connecticut. **NL**

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